

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2021

Mr. Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan:

We write to express our concern about the proposed closure of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 Laboratory in Richmond, California.

The Richmond Lab is a full-service analytical lab serving EPA Region 9, which assists the Region in its work in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, the Pacific Islands, and 148 tribes. Its employees are highly-trained and skilled analytical staff including chemists, biologists, inspectors, and facility-support contractors. Their work contributes significantly to the work done by EPA in the region and across the country. The lab itself has unique analytical capabilities, like VI investigation support with Radiello analyses, RSK analyses of dissolved gases, and In Vitro Bioaccessibility Analyses (IVBA). All of this is in addition to other services it performs, which include Drinking Water Laboratory Certification of State, Tribal, and Territorial Laboratories, field sampling support, and field analytical support.

With the closure of the Richmond Lab, most of Region 9's lab services are being transferred to outside the Region to combine with an ORD lab in Corvallis, Oregon. Although the agency has assured us and its employees that Region 9 will "continue to have access to a full-service analytical lab when the Richmond Lab's operations are transferred," we have significant concerns.

While the Richmond Lab employees have been offered to relocate to Corvallis, it is our understanding that none of the employees plan to make that move. In order to replicate the work done by these experienced professionals, EPA will now have to hire an entire new staff for the same operations, who could take years to hire and train. Further, while EPA has told us in a prior written response on December 17, 2019 that those employees wishing not to relocate would be able to make their duty station the Field Services Support Center in the Bay Area, it is our understanding that there is not sufficient space for the employees who are choosing not to move in the new Hayward facility and that the work they will do there is not comparable to the work they are currently doing in the Richmond Lab.

This move and subsequent departure of experts leaving the EPA will lead to a loss of significant institutional knowledge. Moving the Lab out of state – and out of the Region completely – disconnects the lab with the people and the Pacific Southwest region that they serve. The Region will also lose access to critical analytical capabilities, including the ability to access immediate

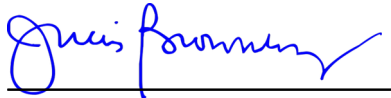
analyses of air, water, and soil samples. In the response your agency shared in late 2019, you cited a cost savings of \$2.8 million annually. This short-sighted move may save money on the front-end, but will result in fewer and slower services for the entire Region at a time when we should be prioritizing our environmental stewardship and analysis.

We respectfully request you re-review the decision to close the Richmond Lab and trust that it will receive the serious consideration it deserves. Thank you for taking the time to consider our thoughts on this matter.

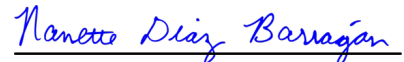
Sincerely,



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



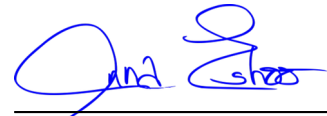
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



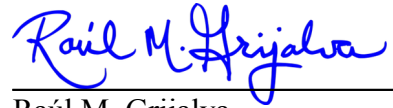
Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



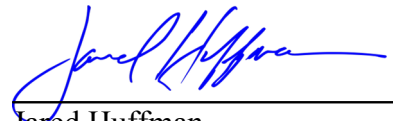
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



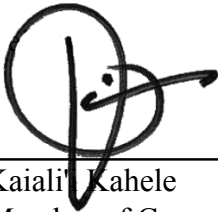
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Jared Huffman
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Kaiali'i Kahele
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Ro Khanna
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Barbara Lee
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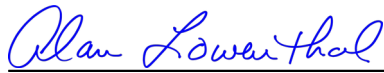
Susie Lee
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
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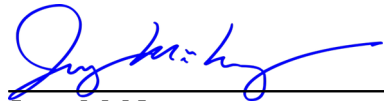
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



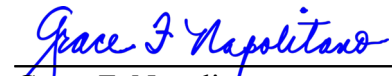
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



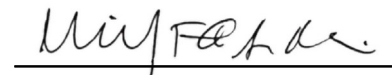
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